

Administration, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I joined the President and Health and Human Services Secretary Shalala today at the White House to call on Congress to approve a prescription drug benefit in Medicare. We also called on private health plans to continue providing coverage for medicine that doctors prescribe.

The problem is twofold. Millions of Americans, young and old, cannot afford the high costs of prescription drugs. And the majority in Congress refuse to lift a finger to reduce these prices and help protect public health.

Unlike other industrialized nations, the U.S. does not regulate drug prices. So drug companies charge us the highest prices of any nation by multiples of two and three and even four times what citizens in other countries pay.

Within the United States, drug companies are charging the highest prices to those with the least bargaining power, the elderly and those without health insurance. Drug companies are diverting also huge sums of money, money that comes from inflated drug prices, into advertising.

From a market perspective, drug companies are doing everything they should be doing. We cannot blame drug companies for maximizing their profits. They make more money than any other industry in America. That is their job. Nor can we blame the President and many of us in Congress for taking steps to protect seniors and the uninsured and to address the ramifications of what drug companies are doing to the disadvantaged. That is our job.

I have introduced an initiative that would bring down prices without taking away the industry's incentive to act like an industry. My bill promotes good old-fashioned American competition.

The Affordable Prescription Drug Act, H.R. 2927, does not use price controls or regulations to bring down prescription drug prices. What my bill does is reduce drug industry power and increase consumer power by subjecting the drug industry to the same competitive forces that other industries bear. It is a means of moderating prices that are too high without inadvertently setting prices too low.

Drawing from intellectual property laws already in place in the U.S. for other products in which access is an issue, pollution control devices as one example, legislation would establish product licensing for essential prescription drugs.

If a drug price is so outrageously high that it bears no semblance to pricing norms for other industries, the Federal Government could require drug manufacturers to license their patent to generic drug companies. The generic companies could sell competing products before the brand name expires, paying the patentholder royalties for that right. The patentholder would still be amply rewarded for being the first on the market, and Americans would benefit from competitively driven prices.

Alternatively, a drug company could lower voluntarily their price, which would preclude the Government from finding cause for product licensing. Either way, Madam Speaker, the price of prescription drugs would go down.

The bill requires drug companies to provide audited, detailed information on drug company expenses. Given that these companies are asking us to accept a status quo that has bankrupt seniors and fueled health care inflation, they have kept us guessing about their true cost for far too long.

We can continue to buy into drug industry threats that R&D will dry up unless we continue to shelter them from competition. That argument, however, Madam Speaker, falls apart when we look at how R&D is funded today.

Long story short, most of research and development dollars are provided by U.S. taxpayers. Get this: fifty percent of all the research and development for drug development in this country are paid for by taxpayers and the National Institutes of Health and other Federal and State agencies; and of the 50 percent that drug companies actually spend, they get tax deductions from Congress for that.

Yet, prescription drug companies reward American taxpayers by charging Americans consumers two times, three times, four times the price for prescription drugs that people in other countries pay.

Madam Speaker, we can do nothing in this body, or we can dare to challenge the drug industry on behalf of seniors and every health care consumer in this country.

I urge my colleagues to support lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. COBURN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ETHERIDGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. WEYGAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WEYGAND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP: LEAD BY EXAMPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I have introduced today a sense-of-Congress resolution. This sense-of-Congress resolution simply says that if we are going to engage in an across-the-board cut in all the Federal agencies, then Members of Congress should accept a similar cut in their salaries.

I would like to share the contents of my resolution:

"Whereas, Congress may pass an across-the-board funding reduction for Federal agencies to bring closure to the debate on Fiscal Year 2000 funding levels;

Whereas, lawmakers voted themselves a 3.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment this year;

Whereas, salaries of Members of Congress would not be affected by an across-the-board reduction;

Whereas, the rest of the Government's payroll would be affected by the proposed reduction, which would likely result in layoffs and temporary furloughs;

Whereas, it is estimated that the reductions could force layoffs of 39,000 military personnel; and

Whereas, programs at the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services, programs such as Meals on Wheels, the National Institutes of Health, Head Start, and the Safe and Drug Free Schools program would be reduced.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that any across-the-board funding reduction for agencies in Fiscal Year 2000 should also include the same reduction for salaries of Members of Congress."

Why have I introduced this resolution? It is because a 1.4 percent reduction, as is being discussed, would lead to approximately 103,000 fewer women, infants, and children from benefiting from the food assistance and nutrition programs offered under the WIC program.

Title I, which provides educational benefits for disadvantaged students, would be cut by \$109 million. Head Start would be cut so that some 6,700 fewer children would be able to benefit from Head Start programs.